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UNCLAS TAIPEI 001512

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TAIWAN MAKING SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS ON TIP

1. (U) Action Request see paragraph 7.

2. (U) AIT officers visited the Hsinchu Detention Center on March 29 and found the situation considerably improved for TIP victims since the November 2004 G/TIP visit. Ministry of Interior (MOI) authorities have made substantial efforts to improve protection of TIP victims at the facility and told AIT of plans for further improvements.

3. (U) During their March 29 visit to the Hsinchu Detention Center, AIT officers noted the following improvements:

(A) A separate facility has been designated for minors and TIP victims. Each female illegal immigrant detained is screened by law enforcement authorities and social workers, who interview her and examine her circumstances in order to determine if she is an actual TIP victim. Those women designated as victims are then placed in this separate facility, where they are provided special treatment, including access to social workers, counseling, relative freedom to move about the facility, books and magazines, recreation time, crafts, better housing conditions, and television. New bathroom facilities are under construction for the TIP victims in this separate building.

(B) The demeanor and attitude of the women living in the separate facility has markedly improved since the November 2004 visit to the Hsinchu Detention Center. They no longer live in a rigid military-like environment and are generally free to do what they wish within the facility. (Note: the facility still has bars on the windows, but officials told AIT they hope to build a new facility that would not have bars but still be secure since most women do not want to return to Mainland China and would leave.) The women seemed relaxed and did not appear threatened by their environment. In a separate ward for women with infants, all of the babies appeared healthy and the mothers appeared content, smiling frequently and chatting with AIT officers.

4. (U) MOI and National Police Agency (NPA) officials requested AIT assistance in arranging training by U.S. experts on how to effectively identify, treat, and house TIP victims. TIP, they said, is a relatively new problem for Taiwan and the government needs the help of experts, especially social workers and counselors, because Taipei lacks the expertise to offer victims the best treatment available. MOI and NPA Officials told AIT that they were meeting that afternoon with NGO experts to discuss how to make additional improvements at Hsinchu. AIT told MOI that our G/TIP office wants to work with Taiwan to improve the situation for TIP victims and that AIT would pass the MOI request back to Washington.

5. (U) Comment: While the TIP situation at Hsinchu still has room for improvement, the progress made since the November visit is very encouraging. Authorities at the detention center told AIT that the improvements made thus far were only the beginning, since a comprehensive program for TIP victims is being developed. MOI and NPA immigration officials and NGO experts are working to devise a comprehensive plan to care for TIP victims. They fully recognize that a more suitable facility, one less resembling a detention center, is important and hope to eventually construct a new building.

6. (U) AIT believes Taiwan is making substantial efforts to improve its treatment of TIP victims, and that under these circumstances Taiwan should not be downgraded to Tier 2. The Tier 2 definition does not accurately characterize Taiwan's efforts, since the government has provided evidence that it has, in fact, worked to improve protection for TIP victims and is making continued efforts to improve protections and treatment further. End comment.

7. (U) Action Request. Please provide a response to Taiwan's request for guidance and assistance.

PAAL